



The Lemonier Express

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Message From the Commander

Well this is a bittersweet occasion for me. This will be my last Commander's Message for the Monthly Family News Letter. I will be leaving the end of this month and Major General (select) Sam Helland will assume command of the CJTF. One year is a long time to be separated from your family and loved ones (as I am sure my wife and children would attest), but it has indeed been a privilege to serve with the great Americans and patriots that I have been blessed to have under my command here in Djibouti. Though a challenging environment, we have had a great effect, both on improving host nation capability and disrupting and defeating the terrorist who have tried to operate here.

I want to especially thank my staff, MARCENT Djibouti, JSOTF-HOA, and the multiple units that have cycled through as part of the team. In my 28 years of service, this has been the most holistic, joint effort I have been privileged to be a part of. You can be extremely proud of what your loved ones have accomplished.

The best news is that Sam Helland is a great American and an even better leader. He is the perfect person to take the CJTF to the

next level of engagement. If I were to hand pick my relief, Sam would have been the person. He began his military career as an enlisted member of the Army Special Forces and was later commissioned as an Officer of Marines. He is a CH-53 helicopter pilot (so he is obviously smarter than I am), was a MEU (SOC) commander, and recently commanded Marine Forces South...that means he was the Marine Corps' senior commander in Central/South America. I would like to welcome he and his wife to the CJTF-HOA family.

I hate to repeat myself, but I do not have better words to end with than the quote by Thomas Pane (one of our Founding Fathers): "If there must be trouble, let it be in my day that my children may have peace." I am proud and honored to have served along side your loved ones here in the Horn of Africa. I am proud of the encouragement, support, and prayers that you at home have offered on a continuous basis. I have made many deployments in my 28 years, but this has had the least number of challenges, especially from the home front. That is a direct reflection of your courage and commitment and I would like to close by saying publicly that your contribution has been significant. The unsung heroes of every war are the loved ones left behind. How well they do their job directly affects the focus those in harms way are able to maintain. Your performance has been magnificent. You truly are modern day Patriots who have chosen to sacrifice rather than forfeit freedom.

We are having a significant impact out here in winning back the neighborhoods from the terrorists who would seek to move in and inflame the passions of an impoverished people. We are winning and you should be proud. In the words of our President - "We will not falter, we will not fail." We are freeing the world of terrorist tyranny. Thank you for your continued support and prayers. Keep the home fires burning and God bless you.

Sincerely,

Mastin M. Robeson
Brigadier General, US Marine Corps
Commander, CJTF-HOA

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

CJTF-HOA Info

- 1(866)360-3775
- 1(910)451-2222

American Red Cross

- 1(877)272-7337

TriCare Appointment/Advice

- 1(800)931-9501



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